

THE LOST GENERATION: HOPE FOR TOMORROW

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: JUDGES

Judges 2 (NASV)

I. BACKGROUND

A. COMPOSITION

1. AUTHORSHIP

- a. Not given in Scripture
- b. Jewish tradition says **Samuel**—mid-11th century
- c. Unity of style and organization—suggest one author

2. DATE OF WRITING

- a. Some scholars say
 - Oral tradition until 10th century
 - Initially written about 9th century
 - Edited—final form about 6th century
- d. Internal evidence—suggests much earlier date
 1. *After* Ark of Covenant removed from Shiloh
 - a. **Jgs 18:31; 20:27**—speak of this event in past tense
 - b. Ark removed by Philistines just after Samuel's call—**I Sam 4:3-11**
 - c. Just before beginning of Saul's reign—**1043 BC**
 2. *Before* David expelled Jebusites permanently from Jerusalem
 - a. **Jgs 1:21**—Jebusites lived in Jerusalem—*to this day*
 - b. David expelled them in **II Sam 5:5-9**—about **1004 BC**
 3. Therefore, late 11th century—between **1043 and 1004 BC**

B. SETTING/SITUATION

1. HISTORICAL PERIOD

- a. From end of Joshua's conquest to beginning of monarchy
 1. **Traditional** dating = **1381-1043**
 2. End of Joshua's conquest/rule—**1381**

➤ Traditional dates: Exodus 1446—Entry 1406—Conquest 25 years = 1381

3. Beginning of Saul's reign—**1043**

4. Total—**342 years**

b. Problem

1. **Biblical** dating = **410 years**

2. By adding 'years of oppression' + 'years of peace'

c. Solution

1. Dates in Judges not mutually exclusive—not a continuous line—but overlap

2. Probable overlapping of dates in Judges follow this pattern

▪ **5 phases**—with **7 cycles** of Judges—some overlapping = 341 years

3. 341 years—almost exactly agrees with traditional dating of period

2. FORMIDABLE TASK AHEAD

a. **Mountainous** terrain

▪ Helped to protect pockets of resistance

b. **Weaponry**

1. Beginning of Iron Age—about 1200 BC

2. Introduced by Hittites—monopolized by Philistines

3. Israelites did not have these weapons until period of monarchy

c. **Organization and Alliances**

1. Israel—loosely connected confederation—without central unity

2. Egypt

a. Controlled the main trade routes

b. Allied with several Canaanite people—who appealed for help

d. Numerous **opponents**

1. **Within/bordering Canaan**—mainly Indo-European

a. Israel had not driven out all the Canaanites—**Josh 13:1-7**

b. Each tribe failed to drive out its portion—**Judges 1**

c. Remaining people

- Philistines—Pentapolis = Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron
- Canaanites—generic term—but also specific tribes (Josh 7:9; 11:13)
- Hittites
- Jebusites—around Jerusalem
- Amorites
- Hivites
- Perizzites

2. Semitic tribes—East of Jordan

a. Edomites—south of Dead Sea—centered on Mount Seir

- Descendants of Esau—Ge 36:9
- Refused passage to Moses—Numbers 20

b. Moabites—east of Dead Sea—north of Edom

- Descendants of Lot—by older daughter—Gen 19:37
- Driven there just before Exodus by Amorites—(Nu 21)

c. Ammonites—north of Ammon

- Descendants of Lot—by younger daughter—Ge 19:38
- Modern Jordan (capital Amman)

d. Midianites—nomads from east of Gulf of Aqaba

- Descendants of Abraham
- Through son Midian by concubine Keturah—had five grandsons—Ge 25:4

II. KEY THEMES

A. CENTRAL PROBLEM

- ISRAEL ABANDONS JEHOVA AND TURNS TO GODS OF CANAANITES

B. CENTRAL MESSAGE

- GOD PUNISHES SIN—BUT DELIVERS REPENTANT PEOPLE

C. KEY TEXT—CHAPTER 2

- GIVES REASON WHY CANAANITES WERE NOT EXPELLED
- SHOWS CYCLIC PATTERN FOR THE BOOK

D. KEY VERSE

21:25—*In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

E. PURPOSES

1. GIVES HISTORY FROM CONQUEST TO MONARCHY
2. SHOWS CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING GOD
3. SHOWS GOD'S MERCY AND WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE AND RESCUE
4. JUSTIFICATION FOR MONARCHY—WRITTEN EARLY IN MONARCHICAL PERIOD

F. JUDGES

1. WERE NOT JUDICIAL FIGURES
2. INSTEAD—CHARISMATIC LEADERS—DELIVERERS
 - a. Charismatic leaders—deliverers
 - b. Raised up by God—to deliver people
 - c. God's Spirit was upon them
 - d. Purpose—to drive out oppressor and establish peaceable rule
 - e. Limited
 1. In time—did not set up a dynasty
 2. In geographical scope
 - a. Led from specific tribal areas
 - b. Some probably overlapped with other judges
 - c. May have influenced more/all of Israel
 - d. But—"The land had rest—was undisturbed"
 - Might have been all Israel
 - Might mean regional rest

G. SEVEN CYCLES—REPEATED IN JUDGES

1. PATTERN = Sin → Punishment → Repentance → Deliverance
2. EXPLAINED
 - People do 'evil' by serving other gods
 - Jehovah sends nation to oppress them
 - Sometimes internal division—Abimelech
 - People cry to Jehovah

- He raises up a deliverer
- Oppressor is defeated
- Land has rest

III. OUTLINE

A. DECLINE—1:1-3:6

1. FAILURE TO CONQUER ALL CANAAN—CHAPTER 1
2. REASONS FOR ISRAEL'S FAILURE—CHAPTER 2
3. REMAINING OPPOSITION—AND INTERMARRYING—3:1-6

B. CYCLES OF SIN AND DELIVERANCE—3:7—THROUGH CHAPTER 16

C. ILLUSTRATIONS OF DEPRAVITY—CHAPTERS 17-21

1. IDOLATRY—CHAPTERS 17-18
2. IMMORALITY—CHAPTER 19
3. FRATRICIDE [CIVIL WAR]—CHAPTERS 20-21

IV. SEVEN CYCLES—IN FIVE PHASES

A. PHASE I—SOUTH/SOUTHWEST—CHAPTER 3

1. TWO CYCLES RAN SIMULTANEOUSLY
2. **CYCLE 1**—OTHNIEL IN JUDAH
 - Mesopotamian oppression—8 years
 - Peace—40 years
3. **CYCLE 2**—EHUD IN BENJAMIN
 - Moabite oppression—18 years
 - Peace—80 years
4. SHAMGAR
 - Defeated Philistines and judged Israel
 - Incident—but no cycle or time is established
5. TOTAL TIME = 98 YEARS—[18 YEARS OPPRESSION + 80 YEARS PEACE]

B. PHASE 2—CENTRAL—WEST OF JORDAN—CHAPTERS 4-8

1. TWO CYCLES RAN SIMULTANEOUSLY
2. **CYCLE 3**—DEBORAH IN EPHRAIM

- Canaanite oppression—20 years
- Peace—40 years

3. **CYCLE 4**—GIDEON IN WEST MANASSEH

- Midianite oppression—7 years
- Peace—40 years

4. TOTAL TIME = 107 YEARS—[20 + 40 + 7 + 40]

C. PHASE 3—CENTRAL—WEST TO → EAST OF JORDAN—CHAPTERS 9-10

1. **CYCLE 5**—RESPONSE TO ABIMELECH—GIDEON'S SON

- a. Civil war between Abimelech and Shechem—3 years
- b. Followed by two judges—peace for 45 years
 1. **Tola**—from Issachar—in Ephraim [west]—judged 23 years
 2. **Jair**—in Gilead/East Manasseh—judged 22 years

2. TOTAL TIME = 48 years—[3 + 23 + 22]

D. PHASE 4—CENTRAL—EAST TO → WEST OF JORDAN—CHAPTERS 11-12

1. **CYCLE 6**—FOUR JUDGES

- a. Ammonites oppressed—18 years
- b. Four Judges—ruled simultaneously
 - Jephthah—in Gilead/East Manasseh—6 years
 - Ibzan—in Judah (South)—7 years
 - Elon—in Zebulun (North)—10 years
 - Abdon—in Ephraim (Central)—8 years

2. TOTAL TIME = 28 years—[18 + 10 for longest Judge—Elon]

E. PHASE 5—SOUTHWEST—CHAPTERS 13-16

1. **CYCLE 7**—SAMSON IN DAN

- Philistines oppressed—40 years
- Peace—20 years

2. TOTAL TIME = 60 years—[40 + 20]

V. BIBLICAL TEXT—READ CHAPTER 2

VI. EXPOSITION

A. KEY POINTS IN CHAPTER 2

1. GOD WILL NOT DRIVE OUT ENEMIES BECAUSE ISRAEL DISOBEYED—2-3
2. NEW GENERATION DID NOT KNOW WHAT GOD HAD DONE—10
3. ISRAEL WORSHIPED PAGAN GODS—11-13
4. GOD SENDS NATION TO OPPRESS ISRAEL—14-15
5. ISRAEL ASKS FOR HELP—15
6. GOD RAISES UP JUDGE TO RESCUE ISRAEL—16-18
7. PEOPLE LIVE FAITHFUL LIVES WHILE JUDGE LIVES—19
8. CYCLE REPEATS AFTER JUDGE DIES—20-23

B. WHY CANAANITES WERE STILL IN THE LAND

1. ISRAEL DISOBEYED

- a. Many cities not conquered
 - Joshua 13:1-7
 - Judges 1:27-36; 3:1-6
- b. Did not fulfill covenant with God—Dt 20:16-18
- c. But made covenant with inhabitants—and did not tear down altars
- d. Led to intermarriage and idolatry—3:6
- e. So—the Lord said—*I will not drive them out before you*—**2:3**

2. KEY CONCEPT—DIVINE INITIATIVE AND GRACE

- a. They possess the land—only because God gave it to them
- b. They cannot drive out their enemies—only God can enable it
- c. Continued possession depended on God's blessing

C. PRINCIPLES FROM JUDGES

1. GOD PUNISHES DISOBEDIENCE

2. GOD CAN USE DISOBEDIENCE FOR OUR GOOD

- a. He put Israel in situations where they had to depend on Him
- b. Situations where Israel learned more about His purpose for them
- c. Situations where they grew in relationship with Him

3. GOD USES IMPERFECT PEOPLE—FOR HIS PURPOSE

- a. Gideon made an idol for his people—chapter 8

- b. Jephthah made a rash vow—and sacrificed his child/daughter—chapter 11
- c. Samson was self-serving and disobedient

1. Went against the Law

- a. Married Philistine idol-worshiper
- b. Ex 34:11-17—warns against the consequences—leading to idolatry
- c. Dt 7:3—specifically forbids this marriage
- d. In defying his parents—his response was *very* telling!

14:3—*But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she looks good to me.”*

In other words—“Get her for me, for she is **right in my own eyes.**”

2. Broke his Nazirite vow

- a. Nu 6:2-21—avoid strong drink, not cut hair, touch dead bodies, or eat unclean food
- b. Samson—age honey out of the carcass of a dead lion

3. Slept with a prostitute in Gaza—16:1ff

5. BAD THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN OUR OWN EYES

- a. Abimelech’s tyrannical rule—and civil war with Shechem—chapter 9
- b. Jephthah’s child sacrifice—like the pagan tribes around him—chapter 11
- c. Idolatry of Micah (Ephraim), the Levite, and the Tribe of Dan—chapter 17-18
- d. Immorality—homosexuality, rape—in Gibeah by Benjamites—chapter 19
- e. Civil War—between Israel and Benjamin—chapter 20
- f. Kidnapping—for remnant of Benjamin to take wives at Shiloh—chapter 21

6. THE MAKING OF KINGS—IS NOT THE SOLUTION

A. JUDGES AS AN APOLOGETIC FOR MONARCHY

1. Four times—Judges says—in those days there was no king in Israel

17:6—18:1—19:1—21:25

2. Argument could be made—a king was necessary for law and order

B. ARGUMENTS AGAINST MONARCHY—NOT THE SOLUTION

- 1. God warned against having a king—and their eventual regret—**I Sam 8**
- 2. Eventually—corrupted monarchy (and priesthood) led to Israel’s downfall

3. Israel had done well without a king—under Moses and Joshua
 4. The better solution was—follow the KING that you have—His theocracy!
7. BAD THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE FORGET WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US
- a. Israel was commanded to teach these things to their children—the Shema
 - b. We must rehearse the might acts of God to our children—for them to teach their children
8. GOD DELIVERS
- a. God is faithful to His covenant with us—even when we are not
 - b. We can always call upon Him—and He will save us
 - c. No generation is beyond hope

EXAMPLE—“13th GENERATION”